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Teaching Students to Think Critically

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Abstract: *Today's development, students, students are not able to deny their personal critical information to the personal teacher and other things. Our article provides insight and knowledge about what critical thinking is.*

Keywords: *Critical thinking, Teaching Critical Thinking, Format the Question, Gather the Information, Apply the Information.*

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Main part: Firstly, there is no single, commonly agreed definition of the term 'critical thinking'. However, most commonly as teachers we use it to refer to what are known as the higher-order thinking skills. These higher-order thinking skills are skills that require us to think in a deeper, more complex manner. If you are familiar with Bloom's taxonomy, think of the upper levels of the hierarchy - analyze, evaluate, create. We could also add infer to this list of critical thinking skills. Put simply, critical thinking requires the student to engage in an objective analysis of a topic and evaluate the available information in order to form a judgment. Critical thinking demands a systematic approach to evaluating new information. It encourages us to question and reflect on our own knowledge and how we arrive at the opinions we have and make the decisions we make.

Why Is Critical Thinking Important?

Our students need to be able to think critically to make rational decisions on what to believe or what course of action to take. An inability to think critically can leave students vulnerable to muddied thinking and the possibility of believing in unsound ideas. Critical thinking helps students to filter the wheat from the chaff, intellectually speaking. Developing strong critical thinking skills helps students to eliminate dubious data to leave only the strongest, most reliable information. At its core, critical thinking is about having good reasons for our beliefs. It helps us to navigate through bias (our own and that of others) to avoid manipulation or becoming enslaved by our feelings. These are essential skills in an age of overwhelming information. Helping our students to develop their critical thinking skills not only inoculates them against embracing flawed ideas, but these skills are also some of the most in-demand by employers and this looks set to continue to be so well into the future. This is due to the ever-increasing pace of technological change. It is impossible to accurately predict the specific requirements of many future jobs. One thing is for sure though, so-called soft skills such as critical thinking will ensure students will be able to adapt to whatever shapes the workplace of the future will take.

Teaching Critical Thinking

There is any number of ways to introduce critical thinking into the classroom, either as discrete activities, or interwoven into lessons with other stated objectives. However, it is helpful to students

to take the time to teach a variety of strategies to help them think critically about the ideas they encounter which will help them form their own opinions. An opinion based on critical thinking does not rely on gut feeling, but rather on rational reasoning which often requires some form of initial research. Let's start by taking a look at some ways you can encourage critical thinking in your classroom, especially in the research process.

Format the Question

In the age of the Internet, access to information is longer the major hurdle facing the inquisitive student investigator. If anything, the real problem now is knowing how to appropriately sift through the almost inexhaustible amount of information out there.

The key to this filtration process is the formulation of the research question. How the question is composed and formatted will inform exactly what information the student is looking for and what information can be discarded.

The type of question formatted here will depend on the purpose of the research. For example, is the question intended to establish knowledge? Then, it may well be a straightforward What type question, for example, What are the consequences of a diet high in processed sugars?

If the question is geared more towards the use of that information or knowledge, then the question may be more of a Why type question, for example, Why do some commentators claim that a diet high in processed sugars is the greatest threat facing public health?

Gather the Information

Once the question has been clearly defined, then the process of gathering the information begins. Students should frequently refer back to their research question to ensure they are maintaining their focus.

As they gather information in relation to their question, reference to their initial question will help them to determine the relevance of the information in front of them. They can then weigh up whether or not the information is helpful in moving them further towards answering their initial research question.

Explore Other Points of View

This is the final testing ground of an opinion that has been forged in the fires of critical thinking. Though students will have been exposed to competing ideas earlier in the research stage, they should now take the time to measure their matured opinion against these other points of view.

Exploring alternative viewpoints helps us to evaluate our own choices and to avoid stagnating in our own biases and innate preferences. Doing this helps us to make the most informed decisions possible.

Now that we've had a look at a step-by-step approach to critical thinking, let's take a look at some creative ways to help students exercise those critical thinking muscles in the classroom. Getting critical doesn't have to be boring.

Conclusion: In short, every student teacher is allowed to think freely and say that he thinks critically about something. Because under every critical thought lies a deep innovation and collection of thoughts**.**

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